

1233899

Registered provider: Active Ark Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a private company. It is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to two children or young people, irrespective of gender, who have social and/or emotional difficulties and/or learning disabilities.

Inspection dates: 13 to 14 June 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **good**

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 24 October 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/10/2018	Full	Good
16/07/2018	Full	Inadequate
14/03/2018	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
06/09/2017	Full	Good

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the home's child protection policies. (Regulation 12 (1)(2)(a)(vii))</p> <p>This relates specifically to checking visitors on arrival, making sure they have a legitimate reason for visiting the home and ensuring that a record is made of the visit.</p>	12/08/2019
<p>The care planning standard is that children—</p> <p>receive effectively planned care in or through the children's home; and</p> <p>have a positive experience of arriving at or moving on from the home.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that arrangements are in place to—</p> <p>manage and review the placement of each child in the home. (Regulation 14(1)(a)(b) and (2)(b)(ii))</p> <p>This relates specifically to ensuring that the home's care plans are sufficiently detailed, taking into account the child's gender, religion, ethnicity, cultural and linguistic background, sexual identity and mental health, any disability, their assessed needs, previous experiences and any relevant plans.</p>	12/08/2019
<p>After consultation with the fire and rescue authority, the registered person must—</p> <p>ensure, by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals,</p>	12/08/2019

that persons working at the home and, so far as is reasonably practicable, children are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of a fire. (Regulation 25(1)(d))	
In particular, make sure that visitors working at the home are aware of the arrangements should the fire alarm sound.	
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if—	12/08/2019
there is an allegation of abuse against the home or a person working there. (Regulation 40 (4)(c))	
The registered person must ensure that an independent person visits the children's home at least once each month.	12/08/2019
The independent person must provide a copy of the independent person's report to—	
HMCI;	
upon request, the local authority for the area in which the home is located;	
the placing authorities of children;	
the registered provider and, if applicable, the registered manager; and	
the responsible individual (if one is nominated). (Regulation 44(1) and (7)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e))	

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children and young people are settled and happy living in this home. They enjoy excellent relationships with staff who are very nurturing in their approach. One child said, 'The staff, and I mean all of the staff, are the best. They are brilliant.' The quality of these relationships clearly helps children and young people to thrive, and positively influences the good progress they are making.

Staff involve children and young people in their care planning and consult them regularly to make sure that their views and wishes are understood and considered. Consequently, children and young people have a good understanding of the reason for their care and the arrangements in place to support them while at this home. However, the home's care planning documents fail to express the full range of children and young people's

needs and how they will be met. For instance, children and young people's religious and cultural identities are not dealt with. This means planning is less than comprehensive and the documents have limited value in guiding staff.

Staff support children and young people's learning effectively. One child currently enjoys excellent attendance at a local primary school and is making significant progress. One headteacher commented, 'The home is working in a really positive way and supporting the school. They are meeting her needs. There is good communication and staff are good at trying different strategies to support her.'

Staff are skilful at helping children and young people with informal learning. For some, this is reading and helping with homework, while for others this involves some more structured work with young people to achieve accredited vocational awards. With staff support, children and young people thrive and flourish in this home, growing in confidence and self-esteem.

The home encourages children and young people to take part in a wide range of activities available in the home and in the local community. These include attending after-school clubs, day trips to local attractions, swimming and trampolining, as well as games and crafts that entertain them in the home. The activities provide children and young people with good opportunities to socialise with peers, have fun and keep active.

Staff understand the importance of maintaining positive family relationships. Children and young people are regularly supported by staff to enjoy family time with parents, siblings and extended family members. This ensures that children and young people can keep in touch and retain those relationships that are most significant to them.

All professionals consulted during this inspection spoke highly of staff and the quality of care provided. One social worker commented, 'She settled in incredibly well. That is a testament to staff who understand her needs. They engage her well in activities. They are a close-knit staff team who provide her with consistency and routine.'

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Children and young people say they feel safe and protected. The trusting relationships they share with staff are key to this success. Consequently, children and young people find stability and feel certainty in their day-to-day lives.

Since coming to live at this home, children and young people's behaviour has significantly improved. The use of sanctions and physical intervention is extremely rare. However, when used, these are proportionate and are appropriately monitored and reviewed by the manager.

Children and young people's positive behaviour is creatively supported using a range of incentives that are age appropriate. Children and young people are encouraged to chart and monitor their progress. Their inclusion and participation in this improve their confidence and self-esteem, encouraging them to feel pride in their achievements.

Since the last inspection, there have not been any incidents of children and young people going missing from this home. However, staff are familiar with procedures and the local protocol to follow should this occur.

Robust recruitment practice helps to maintain the safety of children and young people in the home. All staff are suitably checked and vetted to make sure that children and young people are only cared for by staff who are deemed safe and unlikely to cause them harm.

During this inspection, it was identified that visitors to the home are not routinely challenged for identification. Although this did not compromise the safety of children and young people on this occasion, this needs to be firmly embedded in staff practice to ensure that children and young people are kept safe from adults who may harm them.

Additionally, visitors are not routinely advised about fire safety arrangements. Specifically, they are not told what to do should the fire alarm sound. This also should be embedded in staff practice, ensuring people's safety when visiting the home.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has been in post since November 2017 but was not registered with Ofsted until October 2018, following some unexpected delay with her application. She is suitably qualified and experienced, having achieved the level 5 diploma in leadership and management for children's residential care.

The manager has a thorough knowledge of the children and young people in her care and she is passionate that they achieve good outcomes during their time at this home. She leads her staff team with confidence and strives to provide a high standard of care.

The manager and staff work in good cooperation with a range of partner organisations to ensure that children and young people's needs are met and their rights promoted. One professional commented, 'I was able to gather [child's name] views independently. I feel the home was very proactive in sourcing our support.' Another professional said, 'The home is very responsive, especially at short notice. Staff are really helpful.'

Since the last inspection, the manager has successfully acted on and met all requirements and recommendations made previously to improve and develop the home. This has been of benefit to staff who say they now feel better supported in their roles. Revised staffing arrangements mean that staff are less likely to be moved to work in other homes. This has improved the continuity of care that children and young people receive.

Staff, including the manager, now have regular supervision and all have had an annual appraisal, identifying their competencies and areas for professional development. Staff have found this to be a positive experience, appreciating positive feedback and focusing on improving their own professional practice.

Staff benefit from a good range of training opportunities. Most staff have now completed additional training on criminal exploitation and radicalisation and extremism, as this was identified as a shortfall at the last inspection. This has increased and improved their knowledge and understanding of current child protection and safeguarding issues.

Generally, the manager makes sure that Ofsted is informed of any significant incidents in a timely manner. However, on one occasion an unreasonable delay occurred in notifying Ofsted of an incident that occurred in the home. However, this breach in regulation did not compromise children or young people's safety.

More recently, external monitoring arrangements have improved with a new independent person scrutinising and monitoring the home's activity. Delay occurred in establishing this arrangement following the resignation of the previous independent person. Because of this, Ofsted did not receive reports for a three-month period following the last inspection in 2018. This appears not to have majorly affected the quality of care provided, but it has reduced transparency between the home and Ofsted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1233899

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Active Ark Limited

Registered provider address: Active Ark, Unit E, Baron Way, Kingmoor Business Park,
CARLISLE CA6 4SJ

Responsible individual: Louise Matthews

Registered manager: Heather Rooke

Inspector

Gillian Walters, social care inspector

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